

# City of Aventura



# Annual Report 2008



# City of Aventura



## Office of the City Mayor

Dear City of Aventura Residents:

It is my pleasure as your Mayor to present the City's Annual Report for 2008. It has been four years since you elected me to the Office of Mayor. During that period of time, much has been addressed in response to your concerns and we will continue to do so on an ongoing basis.

Now more than ever, our goal is to meet the needs of today's residents, while both literally and figuratively planting the seeds that will grow to better sustain our community. It has always been the vision of your City Commission to maintain a City where one can live, work and play by ensuring that all the amenities are in place to provide these opportunities to all age groups. This can be witnessed by the growth of the City's park system, the creation of a charter school, the activities available at the Community Recreation Center and the expansion of our free shuttle bus service. In light of these economic times and increased fuel costs it is even more important now to continue our efforts to provide a sustainable community for our residents to enjoy.

To that end, much has been accomplished this past year to make the City's new Arts and Cultural Center a reality. The 325-seat, 15,000-square-foot facility will provide a variety of performing arts and cultural programming for all age groups. It can be easily accessed from the Community Recreation Center on NE 188th Street. The City entered into an agreement with the Broward Performing Arts Center Authority to provide startup services and manage the facility. The City Commission created an Arts and Cultural Center Advisory Board that will provide valuable input. Construction is scheduled to begin in March 2009 and be completed by April 2010. The design includes the elements necessary to be classified as an environmentally friendly "green" building. The Center will provide opportunities for our residents to enjoy a variety of events within our community and expand drama and arts programming at our Charter School. The majority of funding for the proposed facility will come from the Miami-Dade County's GOB Program.

The City Commission and I have expanded our "Go Green" efforts in order to save energy, conserve precious natural resources and reduce our impact on climate change. This past year the City recognized those businesses and condominiums that developed and implemented programs to reduce energy consumption and encourage more recycling. We also introduced single-stream recycling containers at all City buildings and parks. This eliminates the need for sorting your recyclables. Residents are encouraged to use these containers at the City parks. We have also purchased two electric cars that will be on the road shortly. In addition, we purchased a third hybrid vehicle, which illustrates our ongoing efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and gasoline consumption by replacing low-mileage vehicles with smaller, fuel-efficient ones. Our landscaping contractor has also "Gone Green" by introducing LP gas-powered lawnmowers. These mowers do not use any gasoline, produce less greenhouse gases, and are much quieter to operate. Over time, these initiatives will also reduce our annual operating costs and negative impact on the environment.

The Aventura City of Excellence School obtained an "A" rating again from the State of Florida and has been recognized nationally for its character education programs. We are proud of its accomplishments.

The constitutional amendment reducing property taxes that was passed by the voters in January 2008 has adversely affected local governments throughout Florida. In addition, the national economic recession characterized by decreased property taxes and sales tax revenue will also have an effect on the City of Aventura. We recognize that this situation impacts all our residents and businesses and want to assure you that the City Commission and I are committed to providing quality services to this community at the lowest possible cost. These are challenging times for all of us. Your City government has taken steps in the past and continues to adhere to sound fiscal policies to place us in a better position to respond to the economic downturn.

As we begin 2009, I want to take this opportunity to thank the community for its valuable support during the past year as we addressed many difficult and important issues on behalf of the future of Aventura.

Sincerely,

Susan Gottlieb  
Mayor

City of Aventura Government Center  
19200 West Country Club Drive  
Aventura, Florida 33180

Main Number .....	305-466-8900
Main Fax Number .....	305-466-8939
Mayor and Commission .....	305-466-8901
City Manager .....	305-466-8910
City Clerk .....	305-466-8901
Finance .....	305-466-8920
Community Services.....	305-466-8930
Community Development .....	305-466-8940
Police Department .....	305-466-8989
Charter School .....	305-466-1499
Job Hotline .....	305-466-8955
Customer Service (Office of the City Manager).....	305-466-8911

## City Commission



Zev Auerbach



Bob Diamond



Teri Holzberg



Billy Joel



Michael Stern



Luz Urbáez-Weinberg



## Office of the City Manager

Residents of Aventura:

We prepare this annual report to communicate with you our achievements of the past year and our plans for 2009, along with an overview of municipal service delivery.

Over the past year, the Country and the South Florida area experienced an economic downturn that resulted in lower home values, rising fuel costs, a national credit crunch, an increase in the jobless rate and revenue short-falls at all levels of government. In 2008, in addition to a \$247 million reduction in the City's taxable value caused by Amendment One, the sagging housing market resulted in another \$477 million reduction in taxable value. Taxable value increases from new construction in the amount of \$555 million assisted in offsetting the loss in property values. However, the overall reduction of \$170 million or \$279,000 in tax revenue resulted in the City experiencing its first loss of taxable value in our 12 years of incorporation.

Due to privatizing and outsourcing many City services over the years, completing \$110 million in capital projects since 1996 and maintaining prudent reserve funds, the City has stabilized costs and is in a better position than most to weather the revenue reductions caused by Amendment One and the economic recession. Last year's comprehensive reevaluation of service levels and budget line items which resulted in operating cost reductions also played a key role in creating the financial sustainability for the City to respond to lower revenues as we prepared last year's budget. The total number of employees contained in the budget decreased for the first time in the City's history. The City continues to enjoy the lowest tax rate at 1.7261 in the County. As we continue to experience a deepening economic recession, the City will begin a very challenging budget preparation cycle. In spite of the loss of revenues last year, the City was committed to accomplishing the many goals established for 2008.

During this past year, the City focused on expanding its park facilities, which included the opening of the new seven-acre Waterways Park, which includes a multipurpose sports field for nighttime activities, playground, basketball court, fitness trail, parking and restroom facilities and a new and expanded dog park facility located on NE 213th Street. All of these projects are aimed at

## City Of Aventura Organization Chart



providing additional recreational facilities for our growing younger population based on input from the community.

The City's charter school completed a successful fifth year and scored an "A" on the School Performance Grade issued by the State of Florida. The total number of students attending the K-8th grades school is 900. This past year the City Commission adopted plans to expand the school to meet the State class size requirements by adding 10 new classrooms. Construction will commence early 2009.

Responding to one of the leading causes of traffic accidents, the violation of red light traffic signals, the City Commission adopted an Ordinance to authorize the use of unmanned cameras to promote compliance and to adopt a civil enforcement system. Automated cameras were initially placed at three intersections in the City in the fall of last year to record vehicles that fail to stop for red lights. In the month of December 2008 alone, 1,428 violations were issued at the three locations.

The City has continued to focus on traffic improvements this past year. Phase I of the Biscayne Boulevard intersection improvements was completed at various locations to improve traffic flow and ease congestion. A new traffic signal was added at the intersections of NE 29th Avenue and NE 188th Street near the Charter School. Aventura Mall traffic flow improvements that included modifications to the Biscayne Boulevard entrance and exits were completed this past summer by the Mall at their cost. Ridership continues to increase on the City's free Shuttle Bus System. Over 19,000 riders a month use this service to travel throughout the City.

I am proud to work with informed elected officials, a dedicated group of City employees and involved citizens as we continually strive to improve our community during these challenging times for local governments. We are committed to provide a community residents take pride in and others seek to emulate. I hope you enjoy reading about the progress of your community, the City of Excellence.

Sincerely,

Eric M. Soroka, ICMA-CM  
City Manager

# City of Aventura

## Finance Department

The Finance Department provides overall financial and administrative support to the City's other operating departments. The primary functions include accounting, budgetary control, purchasing, risk management, payroll, cash management and debt administration.

Our mission is to establish and maintain effective internal controls that safeguard the City's assets and maintain the City's strong financial condition by conducting the City's business operations in a fiscally responsible manner.

In March 2008, Finance issued the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report ("CAFR") for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2007. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada ("GFOA") awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Aventura for its CAFR for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2007. This was the twelfth consecutive year that the City has achieved this prestigious award. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized CAFR. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

### **Additional Finance responsibilities include:**

- Providing administrative, operational and financial assistance to the City Manager and staff.
- Providing Accounting, Accounts Payable, Payroll, Budget, Grant Monitoring and Revenue Collection functions.
- Monitoring/projecting the City's fund balances.
- Preparing/assisting with all financial reports, including the CAFR, the Aventura City of Excellence School Special Purpose Financial Report and the Annual Budget.

- Providing cash/investment and debt management.
- Monitoring/developing financial strategies that ensure fiscal solvency and financial statement integrity through the maintenance of proper internal controls.
- Monitoring and implementing reporting requirements recommended by the State Auditor General, GFOA and GASB.

## Office Of The City Clerk

The City Clerk serves as the City's corporate secretary and is the official records-keeper of the City and custodian of the City seal. The City Clerk is a constitutional officer by Charter and is appointed by and reports to the City Commission. Responsibilities of the City Clerk include:

- Recording the minutes and all official actions of the City Commission and its Advisory Boards.
- Attesting to and maintaining custody of all records of the City including ordinances, resolutions, contracts, deeds, etc.
- Publishing and distributing public notices as required by law.
- Administering the publication and supplementation of the City Code Book.
- Serving as the municipal Supervisor of Elections, conducting all City elections in accordance with city, county and state laws.
- Establishing and coordinating the City's records management program in compliance with state law.
- Responding to public records requests and lien searches.
- Scheduling code enforcement hearings and providing clerical support to the Special Master.
- Providing clerical support to Commissioners and assisting the City Manager with special projects.
- Administering oaths and providing full notary public services.

The City Clerk's Office prepared 41 sets of minutes and 26 public notices, published 37 legal advertisements, drafted seven ordinances and 26 resolutions, responded to 782 lien requests, and prepared 339 welcome letters during Fiscal Year 2007-2008.

Residents are encouraged to attend City Commission meetings, which are held in the Government Center Commission Chamber on the Plaza Level at 19200 West Country Club Drive. To confirm all meeting dates, times and locations, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (305) 466-8901 or visit the City's website at [www.cityofaventura.com](http://www.cityofaventura.com).

Residents are encouraged to attend City Commission meetings, which are held in the Government Center Commission Chamber.



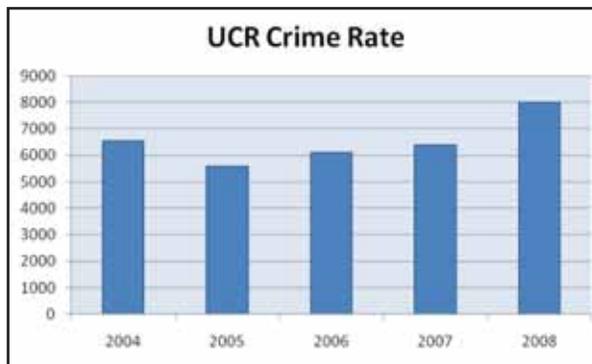
## Public Safety

The Aventura Police Department's commitment to its Mission Statement has allowed it to be recognized as an outstanding police department within the law enforcement community in Miami-Dade County. The men and women, both sworn and civilian, have done an outstanding job in the performance of their duties. In December 2008, the Department was assessed for its CALEA reaccreditation and met all of the requirements. The Aventura Police Department will be officially reaccredited in March 2009 at the next CALEA conference.

The Department supports children and community programs such as the DARE Program, Red Ribbon Week, National Night Out, Annual Food and Toy Drives, Bicycle Safety Rodeos, security surveys for businesses and residences through the Crime Prevention Unit under the Special Services Division. Also, this year the Crime Prevention Division has put on several self-defense classes for women.

The Department has completed a major project this year; the police department now has direct computer access to the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue CAD system in regard to dispatching 911 calls that come in via the Aventura 911 system. Aventura is the first city in Miami-Dade County to have such an interface. As a result of coordinated efforts between Miami Dade Fire Department and the Aventura Police, the residents of the City will receive faster rescue service if medical attention is needed.

With the start of the 2008-2009 FY year the Department was budgeted for 80 sworn employees and 39 civilians. The crime rate for January–December 2008 showed an overall modest increase of 0.25%.



YEAR	TOTAL CRIMES	VIOLENT CRIMES	POPULATION	CRIME RATE	CHANGE
2000	3157	107	25267	12494.6	-6.8 %
2001	2672	100	25903	10315.4	-17.4 %
2002	2335	78	26142	8932.0	-13.4 %
2003	2260	54	27241	8296.3	-7.1 %
2004	1850	73	28202	6559.8	-20.9 %
2005	1646	35	29451	5589.0	-14.8 %
2006	1797	60	29451	6101.0	+9.2 %
2007	1965	77	30383	6400.0	+4.9 %
2008	2363	68	29475	8020.0	+ .25 %

# City of Aventura



## Aventura City Of Excellence School

Aventura City of Excellence School (ACES), established in 2003, serves 900 students in grades Kindergarten through 8 and is the first municipal-sponsored school in Miami-Dade County.

Cutting-edge technology combined with a highly qualified staff makes ACES a vibrant hub of learning. The student-run AM TV show is broadcast live daily to classrooms from a professional TV Production Studio. Classrooms are equipped with interactive Smart Boards and the latest audio-visual equipment. ACES has large classrooms, two oversized art rooms, a 4,000-square-foot media center, science and computer labs, and technology in every classroom.

Aventura City of Excellence School promotes a child-centered learning environment, which encompasses the social, emotional, and academic growth of its students through an academically rigorous program provided in a safe and nurturing environment.

Students discover at a very young age the importance of being caring, contributing and socially responsible citizens. ACES excels in student achievement, community involvement and innovative practices while caring for families, the community and each student's individual needs.

### Highlights of ACES Offerings:

- Enthusiastic and nurturing teachers and staff
- Collegiate-size gym
- Intramural sports program including volleyball, basketball, tennis, dance and golf
- Competitive boys' and girls' basketball
- Extended learning experiences through trips to historic places
- Internationally recognized Character Education program
- Middle school electives include TV Production, Art, Guitar, Journalism and Drama

- Opportunity to earn high school credit for Spanish, Science and Math courses
- Gifted and advanced programs
- After-school programs offering art, sports, thinking games and academics
- Sixth-grade hands-on Eco-Literacy curriculum for science
- 23 unique special-interest clubs offered Friday at school
- Parenting workshops
- A Middle School Leadership Speaker Series
- Author Series

ACES has won numerous state and national awards and achieved an "A" rating for the past four years. The Middle School Eco-Literacy Garden project won first place in the annual Fairchild Botanical Garden Competition for the past two years. ACES was also selected as a top performer in the State Innovation Fair and won the 2008 State School of Character Award. ACES' stellar academic performance, combined with its "whole child" approach to education, has earned ACES the Finalist title in the National Schools of Character Awards. ACES operates as a City Department with the Principal reporting to the City Manager.

## Information Technology

The Information Technology Department provides a secure and stable state-of-the-art computing environment for City staff and customers. The computing environment includes general user applications, specialized business applications, email with spam control, phone systems and the infrastructure required to run the network. Information Technology works closely with other City departments to identify, select and implement applications and technology to help City staff perform their jobs efficiently. The Information Technology Department consists of five employees who support 160 desktop computers, 90 laptops and 25 servers throughout the City. Help desk services are also provided to City employees with 24/7 support in the event of emergencies.

The City continued to utilize technology to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of all operations. Improvements and upgrades were made to existing systems and computer equipment to embracing new technology.

Information Technology has completed various projects throughout our City. In 2008 projects included the installation of eight new applications for the Police Department using technology in support of progressive law enforcement methods, computer equipment and phone systems to equip the new Waterways Park and

Waterways Dog Park and an upgrade of the network infrastructure.

In addition, Information Technology provides other technologies and programs to streamline business processes internally and for our citizens and customers. Information Technology develops and maintains the City's website, [www.cityofaventura.com](http://www.cityofaventura.com); the Aventura City of Excellence School's website, [www.aventuracharter.org](http://www.aventuracharter.org); and an internal web portal for employees to share forms, document and applications. City communications are a function of Information Technology supporting the government access television channel (AVTV), AM radio station, web-based eGovernment applications such as MyAventura and printed materials such as the City newsletter.

Information Technology also provides other technologies and programs to internally streamline business processes for all departments. Among these are the City's Intranet and an internal training program called c.a.r.e. (Computer Awareness Readiness and Education).

The Intranet is an internal web portal that contains forms, documents and applications for employees to use and share. Within it is a paperless document repository for employees to access policy manuals and an online system for managing maintenance requests which allow staff to streamline their work.

The c.a.r.e. program helps educate staff on network security issues, procedures and other computer related issues through a series of workshops, and printed materials.

## Community Services

The mission of the Community Services Department is to provide the residents of Aventura with the highest-quality parks, facilities, events, programs, and activities that reflect the City of Aventura's standards of excellence. The Department provides numerous recreational, cultural and leisure activities and manages the City's parks, facilities, right-of-ways, streets, landscaping and beautification efforts. As the City continues to develop, the Community Services Department continues to use modern practices to respond to the needs of the residents. The department has two operating divisions that deliver these needs, Public Works Division and Parks and Recreation Division.

### **The Public Works Division is responsible for:**

- Maintaining all landscaping, streets, right-of-ways, storm water drainage, decorative street-lighting, signage, public buildings and schools
- Issuing Public Works permits to utilities performing improvements in the public right-of-ways and reviews engineering plans
- Acting as a liaison to public utility service providers and responding to citizen concerns
- Mapping resources with the automated GIS computer system to provide accurate information regarding zoning, land parcels and infrastructure

### **The Parks and Recreation Division is responsible for:**

- Community Recreation Center programming Founders Park, Waterways Park and Veterans Park operations
- Athletic Leagues for both children and adults
- Special events that foster community pride and spirit

The mission of the  
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# City of Aventura

- Cultural Arts, Theater and Leisure programming, which offers trips and tours to the theater, museums, historical places, art festivals and area restaurants
- Managing the free City shuttle service, “Aventura Express”

In April 2009, the City of Aventura will once again be named a “Tree City USA” by the National Arbor Day Foundation for the twelfth consecutive year. This year, the City of Aventura is proud to announce the 2nd Annual Go Green Initiative Program, which raises environmental awareness and recognizes those residents and businesses that are acting now to preserve our environment, save energy and prepare the City of Aventura to be a sustainable community.

On May 3, 2008, the City of Aventura opened its newest facility, Waterways Park, located at 3301 NE 213th Street. This seven-acre park is a beautiful multi-use recreational and athletic facility with lighted multipurpose athletic fields, parking, restrooms, a large covered shelter and playground, full basketball court, exercise path, and staffed welcome center. The existing Waterways Park was renovated as the City’s dog park for residents only, which moved from Veterans Park. Veterans Park is under renovation as a neighborhood park with added restrooms and a picnic shelter and is scheduled to be completed in 2009.

Founders Park, open since 1998, is located on the northeast corner of West Country Club Drive and NE 190th Street. The park features an array of recreational facilities, from a staffed welcome booth, parking, public restrooms, a sun-sheltered playground, open green space, a multipurpose athletic field, two clay tennis courts, a quarter-mile exercise trail and the SplashPad interactive water feature sprayground. The SplashPad, the park’s newest feature, opened in June 2007.

Youth Athletics consist of boy’s leagues and girl’s leagues for soccer, softball, t-ball, basketball and flag football. On 2008, 766 children participated in the City of Aventura Youth Athletics. In addition, the City also offers adult softball leagues.

The annual Founders Day Celebration held every November at Founders Park was enjoyed by over 3,100 residents. This family festival featured Aventura’s own Elsten Torres concert, The High Voltage Dancers and the annual “Aventura Star” resident talent show. Interactive games, puppet shows, face painting, good food and arts and crafts rounded out a fun-filled day of activities for all.

The “Aventura Express” Shuttle Bus Service serves your busy lifestyle with a convenient schedule to better serve the community. “Express Yourself” and see why over 1,080,228 passengers have ridden the Aventura Express.

#### **The Aventura Express features:**

- Five ADA-compliant and air-conditioned buses and bus routes
- Routes that connect you to great shopping and all the places you need to go. The Blue route serves the north end of the City, the Green and Red routes serve the central area, and the Purple and Yellow routes serve the south
- Easy transfers to any Miami-Dade or Broward County Transit route at the Aventura Mall
- Hourly schedules
- Bicycle racks on all buses

The Community Recreation Center is a 25,000-square-foot multi-use facility located in a park-like setting at 3375 NE 188th Street. The Center features a collegiate-size wood floor gymnasium, fitness center, aerobics room, locker and shower facilities, multi-use classrooms and activity centers, and a state-of-the-art technical center with Internet-ready computers. The Center overlooks the Intracoastal Waterway and is an exceptional destination for recreational and leisure activities. The Arthur I. Snyder Park is adjacent to the Community Recreation Center and features an open play area, shade trees and an outdoor plaza perfect for hosting special events.

The Community Recreation Center offers a complete and balanced program of recreation activities, fitness classes, youth programs and social activities that is available to members of all ages. More than 3,000 seniors participated in activities ranging from Mahjong to Aerobics to health and wellness lectures in 2008. Offering diverse programs helps seniors stay active and vibrant in their daily lives and is a great setting in which to meet new people.

Finally, the Cultural Arts, Theater and Leisure program complements the department’s offerings with

In April 2009, the City of Aventura will once again be named a “Tree City USA” by the National Arbor Day Foundation.



events held locally and excursions taken throughout the region to cultural destinations. In 2008, over 600 seniors enjoyed trips and tour excursions to fine art museums, historical destinations, and theater productions. This cultural program adds to the city's leisure programming and creates a diverse package of recreational choices for Aventura residents of all ages.

**2008 Community Services Department  
Attendance and Program Registration Summary**

**ATTENDANCE**

Special Events .....	22,009
Founders Park .....	99,777
Waterways Park .....	34,492
Community Recreation Center .....	57,168
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>213,446</b>

**ACTIVITY/PROGRAM REGISTRATION**

Winter/ Spring/ Summer Camp .....	758
Teacher Planning Day (6) .....	241
Cultural Arts Theatre and Leisure Program ...	688
Youth Athletics .....	766
Adult Athletics .....	260
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>2,713</b>

**Community Development**

The Department of Community Development is responsible for the City's planning, development review, zoning, building plan review and inspections, code enforcement, economic development functions and the issuance of occupational licenses. The department is organized to provide "one-stop" customer service at a centralized location.

The Building Division continues to provide prompt and accessible service. Charged with enforcing the Florida Building Code, this division must review, permit and inspect all new construction and renovations in the City. Last year, the Building Division issued 4,112 building permits and performed 9,365 inspections. Building permits generated approximately \$1,616,000 in revenues. Inspection requests and results are now available online at [www.cityofaventura.com](http://www.cityofaventura.com), under "eEppermits".

The Local Business Tax Receipt Division issued 2,875 local business tax receipts, generating approximately \$820,000 in revenues.

The Planning and Zoning Division processes all land development applications, including site plans, re-zonings, variances and comprehensive plan amendments. In 2008, 27 land development applications were reviewed and processed.

The amendments recommended to the City's Comprehensive Plan in the Evaluation and Appraisal



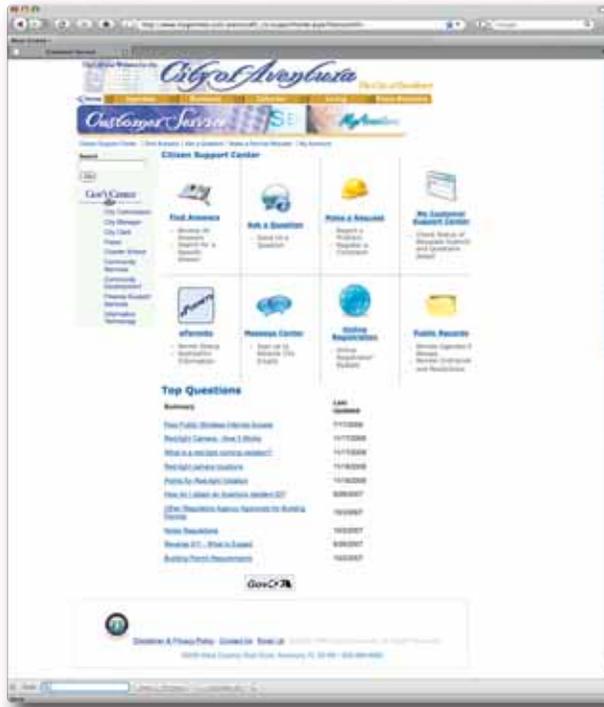
Report in 2007 are now incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and into the Land Development Regulations. The new Plan and regulations provide a cohesive blueprint for development and redevelopment of the City by addressing strategies to accommodate growth while maintaining neighborhood integrity, ensure appropriate height, transitions and linkages, and limit the intensity of future development and redevelopment in a manner that is consistent with current development patterns and that minimizes further negative impacts to the City's infrastructure and quality of life.

A further amendment to the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the City Commission this year to incorporate school concurrency standards into the Plan. Corresponding amendments were adopted into the Land Development Regulations. These amendments strengthen the link between land use planning and school planning and require that developers fulfill level of service standards for schools for new residential developments.

The Code Compliance Division continues to be seen around the community, ensuring that businesses are legally operating with local business tax receipts, and assuring that the necessary building permits have been obtained for construction at homes and businesses have obtained the necessary building permits. Code Compliance Officers also enforce other City codes, such as the property maintenance ordinance, noise and signage regulations. This Division also works with the City's Special Master to conduct hearings related to the City's red light camera program. The Code Compliance Division issued 118 warnings and violations warnings last year and collected approximately \$19,000 in fines. The red light camera program Special Master hearings began in December of 2008.

The Code Compliance Division continues to work with the Aventura Police Department and property

# City of Aventura



owners in the Hospital District to clean up overgrown properties and bring them into compliance with the City's property maintenance ordinance. Their successes have resulted in a cleaner and safer environment for our City.

## City Communications

The City Commission supports a highly accessible government and encourages community participation on many levels. In an effort to share the progress of the City effectively with the public, the City communicates with the community through a variety of mediums.

The City produces several publications throughout the year that include valuable information on government operations. Throughout the year, the Aventura Update newsletter is mailed to every resident. The newsletter includes department updates, a calendar of events, upcoming commission meeting dates and important information on new ordinances, hurricane preparedness, the Capital Improvements Program and the City budget.

During the first quarter of every year, the City publishes an Annual Report, which outlines the progress made in the previous calendar year. Each department highlights its accomplishments along with an outline of the budget and financial performance of the City.

The Aventura City Guide is published throughout the year. This colorful guide includes a complete listing of restaurants, shopping centers, residential developments and recreational facilities as well as important government phone numbers and information on infrastructure improvements throughout the community. It is the official guide to the City of Aventura.

Residents, visitors and businesses can visit the City's website at [www.cityofaventura.com](http://www.cityofaventura.com) to access eGovernment services and useful information.

**Access is available 24/7 for the following eGovernment services:**

- Online Registration System — Register for recreational activities, classes
- ePermits — Check building permits & request inspection appointments
- MyAventura — Make service requests, check FAQs, Message Center subscriptions, ask questions, search knowledgebase for answers
- Public Records — Online document repository
- Download Forms — Library of electronic forms

The website is continually updated with new features and enhancements. In 2008, the MyAventura service portal was launched to provide customers a central place to use eGovernment services such as ePermits and our Online Registration System. MyAventura gives 24/7 access to submit and track service requests; search through a knowledge base of Frequently Asked Questions and subscribe to our email message center.

Tune in to 1650 AM on your radio dial for the latest information on local traffic alerts, reports, special events and news items. The City radio station (WPZQ420) broadcast area is approximately a three-mile radius within City limits.

The City's cable channel is another avenue of communication for City residents. You can find AVTV on Channel 77. Special events and city announcements are broadcast 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The City continues to re-broadcast Commission meetings to the community on your Cable Service on Channel 77 (AVTV).

Since 2007, The Florida Channel programming was added to our broadcast to offer more variety for our residents. The Florida Channel is a window into Florida State Government with programs such as Face to Face and Capitol Update. There are educational programs covering Florida history with Florida Crossroads. Live legislative sessions are also aired from time to time. AVTV broadcasts The Florida Channel programming is broadcast several times a day.

The City Manager meets with new businesses on a regular basis through "Meet Your City Manager" meetings. The City Commission meets monthly and encourages community participation at these meetings. Regularly held on the first Tuesday of the month, City Commission Meetings begin at 6:00 pm in the Commission Chambers of the Aventura Government Center, 19200 West Country Club Drive.



## Budget Priorities/Goals

The following represents the pre-established priorities and goals that provided a framework for the preparation of the 2008/09 Budget Plan. In many areas, the budget contains resources to address and accomplish the pre-established priorities and goals.

- In response to decreased property tax revenues, limit overall budget increase to 2% and operating costs to 5% while maintaining current service levels and programs.
- Create a new Crime Suppression Unit from within the ranks of the Police Department to proactively concentrate on crimes of violence and/or felonies within the City.
- Add 10 additional classrooms at the Charter School for the 2009/10 school year to address state class-size requirements.
- Begin construction on new Arts & Cultural Center scheduled to open in early 2010 and create Arts & Cultural Center Department to oversee the operations.
- Continue to improve traffic safety and management by improving high-risk intersections and integrating red-light violation cameras at key intersections throughout the City.
- Continue to adopt "Go Green" initiatives in order to save energy, conserve precious natural resources and reduce our impact on climate change. These initiatives over time will also reduce our annual operating costs and impact on the environment.
- Replace shuttle buses with more environmentally friendly vehicles utilizing alternate fuel sources.
- Provide funding to maintain landscaped areas and continue to provide a high quality maintenance program.
- Implement and fund the Capital Improvement Program to address the City's infrastructure needs.

## Budget Highlights

**Some of the major points emphasized in the proposed budget are as follows:**

- For the thirteenth year, no property tax increase. By adopting last year's millage rate, which is less than the rollback rate, most residents with a homestead exemption will see a reduction in their City's taxes.
- Total expenditures in all funds are only 2.3% more than last year and the workforce was reduced by two positions.
- The operating cost increases were held to 4.7% without reducing current service levels.
- Fund construction of Aventura Arts & Cultural Center, which will be utilized to host a variety of performing arts and cultural programming for all age groups.
- Includes funds to construct traffic-flow intersection improvements along Biscayne Boulevard and NE 199th Street and resurface Williams Island Road and NE 190th Street at a cost of \$1,174,000.
- Create a new Crime Suppression Unit from within the ranks of the Police Department to proactively concentrate on crimes of violence and/or felonies within the City.
- Provide for \$9,276,800 worth of capital improvements. The City's infrastructure needs are addressed through a broad mix of capital Improvement projects, which will enhance the City's quality of life and its attractiveness.
- Continue to implement technology enhancements that develop our "Electronic Government" to allow the public to interact more easily and conveniently with the City and to automate City operations.
- Continue contracting most maintenance functions, engineering, plan review and inspection services to the private sector.
- Fund police equipment needs, from laptop computers to new police vehicles, in the amount of \$1,204,300.
- Includes \$200,000 to upgrade the drainage system along NE 191st Street and NE 29th Avenue.
- Continue to adopt "Go Green" initiatives in order to save energy, conserve precious natural resources and reduce our impact on climate change.

Residents, visitors and businesses can visit the City's website at [www.cityofaventura.com](http://www.cityofaventura.com) to access eGovernment services and useful information.

# City of Aventura

# Annual Report 2008



*The City of Excellence*